



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600095293Y



1

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE:

AN ATTEMPT TO GIVE

A PROFITABLE DIRECTION

TO THE

PRESENT OCCUPATION OF THOUGHT

WITH

ROMANISM.

By JOHN M'LEOD CAMPBELL,

FORMERLY MINISTER OF ROW.

GLASGOW:

MAURICE OGLE AND SON, ROYAL EXCHANGE SQUARE.

ROBERT OGLE, EDINBURGH.

HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., LONDON.

1851.

110. d. 41.



NOTE.

THAT which is here offered as an attempt to give a profitable direction to the present occupation of thought with Romanism, was originally a part of a course of teaching from the Twenty-third Psalm—Part I. and Part II. being originally two consecutive discourses of that course. This is mentioned in explanation of forms of expression, as well as of a general character in the treatment of the subject, for which the title-page may not prepare the reader, but to change which did not seem to promise any real advantage.

PART I.

LABOUR not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen

the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.”—PSALM XXIII. 5.

THE table here spoken of is that spiritual table, the food on which is that bread of life which hath come down from heaven. The enemies in whose presence it is spread, are the various elements of that fear of death, through which we were all our lifetime subject to bondage. The transition of thought is from the sense of freedom from fear in walking through the valley of the shadow of death, expressed in the previous verse, to the recognition of the source of that freedom in our participation in the eternal life given to us in the Son of God. And the form of the language has reference to the manner of that participation, viz., our eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

I propose to consider, as what the experience here expressed by the Psalmist brings before us, the practical conception of our salvation, *that it is wrought out in our feeding upon Christ*; and I shall do so with special reference to John vi. 27—58, because of

the great fulness of that record of our Lord's own personal teaching on this subject. The passage is indeed one which I believe generally arrests attention; and which, even whilst it is felt to be imperfectly understood, is still vividly remembered; our Lord's earnestness and urgency giving the impression of fundamental importance in that which is taught; while the form of expression which he employs, is not only solemn, but in some sense mysterious; or at least, what makes a peculiar demand for spiritual intelligence. The difficulty experienced by those to whom the words were originally addressed, and the way in which our Lord met their murmuring, rather by reiteration of the statement at which they stumbled than by explanation, contributes to this feeling of mystery and difficulty; which is yet further strengthened by the character of what was offered to them for guidance, viz., the intimation of the impossibility of understanding what was told to them, otherwise than by being taught of God. Yet, however difficult may be the attempt to form definite conceptions of the practical demand made upon us, in such expressions as, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" and however great the solemnity with which that demand is invested, when our Lord adds, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," the conviction that we are called to the study of our Lord's words is inevitable, if we reflect upon this, that they make a requirement, which must be understood in order to

be complied with, and compliance with which involves no less momentous an issue than eternal life. We cannot therefore put from us the inquiry, "What is it to eat the flesh and to drink the blood of Christ?" Nay, we cannot doubt that we are authorized to seek spiritual light as to the bearing upon our own relation to our Lord, of the words, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." And, if we receive our Lord's words to the murmuring Jews, which were both rebuke and guidance, we shall be saved from murmuring, and receive the guidance which we need. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."—"It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

But before proceeding to the direct consideration of what is here taught as to the manner of our participation in the life given to us in the Son of God, I feel it right to consider the claims of another interpretation given to this passage. In understanding it, as in common with Protestants in general I do, as having reference to the life of faith, I feel so borne out, not only by the character of the passage as a whole, but even by the choice of words in such expressions as, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent," and "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst," that I would not feel any call to stop to

notice the interpretation to which I refer, but that it derives an adventitious interest at this moment, from its harmonizing with a mental tendency recently manifested within the Protestant portion of the Church, and which, as a tendency to Romanism, has engaged much, though I fear as yet but superficial, attention. Perhaps I should rather say, that I notice the interpretation in question, for the sake of the opportunity of saying something to you that may be helpful to you in reference to that tendency.

The other interpretation of the passage before us, which I am thus induced to notice is, that it is of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper that the Lord here speaks, that his discourse is, in some sense, prophetical, and that his object is to declare the important place and function which that ordinance was to have in his future Church. This is the interpretation adopted by the Church of Rome. It is also adopted by those, or at least by some of those, who have recently manifested what has been regarded as a tendency to Romanism.

I believe the relation of the passage which they would thus interpret, and of the Lord's Supper, to each other, to be simply this, that they both refer to the same spiritual reality, that ordinance setting forth *in act*, what this passage sets forth *in word*. *They both declare the manner of the life which is by the faith of the Son of God*, using our experience of the conscious process of eating and drinking to illustrate the self-appropriating movements of the will in receiving and in feeding upon the spiritual food, which is our Lord's broken body and shed blood; thus helping us to

conceive of the intimacy of our union with Christ, and of the literal truth of the expression, "partaking in him," through our knowledge of the consubstantiating of the food which we eat with the body which it nourishes. By both, I say, are we thus taught, and of our profitable meditation of the one, and of our worthy participation of the other, the fruit is one and the same; living obedience to the guidance which the Lord's words bestow; living conformity with the meaning of the symbolical act, in which, at his command, we have engaged.

Apart from the arbitrary assumption of the interpretation in question, there is no doubt that the natural understanding of the passage before us, and the light shed on the ordinance of the Lord's Supper by all the passages which unequivocally refer to it, concur in favour of this view, and justify me in saying, that this passage and that ordinance are related to each other only as both shedding light on the life of faith; and this, as the assumption of that other interpretation is arbitrary, may be held conclusive against it.

But I cannot so pass on from it; because, as appears to me, it is not merely an erroneous interpretation, but is one involving very serious and very evil results.

Assume the correctness of this interpretation, and then our Lord's expressions, contracted in meaning from that largeness in which they were parallel to the words, "I am the vine, ye are the branches,"—"I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light

of life," no longer illustrate the life of faith ; neither is there *now* any light shed on the manner of that life by the ordinance of the Supper. For the direct application to that ordinance, as itself the ultimate object, of such words as, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," has entirely changed its character.

But this change amounts to much more than precluding the use which we had made of it, as teaching us our relation to Christ. It is now invested with a new and quite peculiar claim on our attention. For it now claims to be the medium of our participation in Christ. So, in ceasing to be a testimony to our relation to the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls, it has become, so to speak, the rival of that word as the food of eternal life.

As respects the Lord's Supper itself, this change in its character has not destroyed, but, on the contrary, has enhanced its apparent importance ; what we seem to have got taking a far higher place in relation to our salvation, than what we have lost. But are we spiritually enriched by the change ? What we have lost was, *an ordinance bearing testimony to the nature of the life of faith*. What we have got is, *a mystery embodying spiritual life in material elements*. Apart from the question as to what the authority is on which we are required to substitute the one conception of the Lord's Supper for the other, which for the moment I am not taking up, let us consider how our position as spiritual beings is affected by the substitution.

When we consider this matter closely, the first

thing which we realize is, that there is a demand made upon us for another manner of faith than that which apprehends Christ and the grace of God in the gospel of our salvation.

The apostle Paul describes himself as, in preaching the gospel, "By manifestation of the truth, commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Of what takes place in the reception of the gospel, he speaks thus, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Of subsequent progress in the divine life, he says, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Faith, therefore, as respects the first commencement of the life of faith, and as respects its subsequent progress, is an apprehending, and a growing in the apprehension of, the glory of God in the gospel; and so it is a passing into light, and an advancing in light; and that light the highest light, a seeing light in God's light.

But the faith which the Lord's Supper demands, when presented, not as a witness to the manner of life of which Christ is the food, but as itself the appointed medium through which that food is received, is the faith of a mystery,—of a mystery, not in the sense of something hid from ages and generations, and in due time revealed, but a mystery in the sense of being incapable of manifestation; and so it is a faith which receives in the dark, in simple

reliance on authority, and which, in the same reliance, continues in the dark, holding what it understands not nor apprehends, neither expects to understand or apprehend.

It is said, "the peculiar and appropriate faith here is the faith of the words, 'This is my body,' 'This is my blood.'" I believe that this assertion is altogether unwarranted. The faith proper to this ordinance, and in the exercise of which alone it has vitality, is the faith of that which the ordinance means and expresses, viz., the faith, that Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and *not* the faith that this bread is Christ's flesh, and this wine is Christ's blood. But, assuming that the faith called for here is, the faith of the assertion supposed to be made in the words, "This is my body," "This is my blood," such faith is faith, not as to a spiritual truth spiritually discerned, but as to a physical mystery, not discerned, but assumed on authority. Such faith, supposing it to be required from us, is still manifestly distinct from the faith which apprehends the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The distinction, which I expect to be recognized when thus put, between the faith which receives a physical mystery and the faith which apprehends a spiritual truth, is a difference in kind, not in degree. The physical mystery seems greatest, in the form which the doctrine has in the Church of Rome. The measure of the corresponding faith called for is therefore greatest there also. But, as to modifications of transubstantiation, under the name of consubstantia-

tion, or some other name yet undetermined, there is but a difference of degree, so long as it is held that the faith required from us, in partaking of this ordinance, is the faith of the assertion supposed to be contained in the words, "This is my body," "This is my blood." Say to me, "You must believe that *literally* this is Christ's body," or say to me, "You must believe that *mystically* this is Christ's body," the important fact remains, that what I am required to exercise is, a faith about the bread and the wine as the medium in which I receive Christ, and *not* a faith that simply contemplates Christ, and realizes that he is my life.

I say the faith which the less startling forms of thought on this subject call for, is the same in nature with that which receives transubstantiation, differing only in degree. But, inasmuch as transubstantiation is the fullest development of this conception of the ordinance, and the physical mystery greatest so presented, there is an attraction which transubstantiation has to minds that have once come to conceive of special glory to God in the faith of mystery, which the modifications of it have not; or rather, I should say, that the cravings which they in measure feed, it alone can satisfy. If the very essence of the faith exercised, and of the glory given to God in exercising it, be, that I believe on authority that which is not light to me, but altogether darkness, each ray of light shed on the object of such faith, if light could be shed upon it, would just diminish by so much the amount of the demand for faith, and therein the amount of glory to God, which it is ~~not~~

in my power to give. And all modification of the doctrine is but the attempt to let some rays of light fall upon it. Therefore the employment of those, who say "here is a mystery," and still attempt to qualify the mystery, by such comparisons as that to the presence of the soul in the body, is self-contradictory. They are trying to satisfy what they would call a sceptical craving, at the same time that they are demanding an implicit faith; and in proportion as that demand for implicit faith awakens a response in their disciples, will the attempt at explanation not only lose interest, but become distasteful. And hence the fact, that much earnest mental occupation with this matter is so often found to end in Romanism; while those who have first given the downward impetus to the stone, stand wondering and lamenting that it rolls so far.

We know that, in the mind of every Romanist, a very peculiar claim to the adhesion of Christians possessed by his Church is, that that Church, and that Church alone, has the bread of life to minister to the faithful; this language being used with reference to transubstantiation; and I have known the claim, so urged, becoming the first attraction of that Church to Protestants who have eventually become Romanists. And when the teaching of our Lord in the words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," is understood as having the Lord's Supper as its subject; and when, in harmony with this interpretation, the words of the institution itself, "This is my body," "This is my blood," are understood as demanding

the faith as to the elements of bread and wine, that they are the Lord's body and blood, I cannot wonder at such a result,—the Romanist form of the doctrine being at least simpler and more self-consistent.

I do not forget the argument against transubstantiation, that it is not only a mystery, but contradicts also our senses. To ask me to believe in the dark, is not certainly to go so far as to ask me to believe in contradiction to what I naturally feel to be light; and this disadvantage transubstantiation seems to have, as compared with other conceptions of the actual presence of Christ in the bread and wine. But only *seems* to have. I would not make light of the confidence with which any fellow Protestant appeals to our bodily senses, in his rejection of transubstantiation. But, inasmuch as our bodily senses are certainly not our highest faculties of perception, I feel that the contradiction it presents to them, does not weigh more with me, I would say, does not weigh so much with me as the contradiction it presents to a higher endowment with which God has endowed man—the highest sense which he possesses—that faculty of perception which distinguishes him as a spiritual being—the inhabitant not merely of a physical, but of a spiritual universe—that in man which makes him capable of knowledge not of nature only, but of nature's God. What is the physical sense of hearing in comparison with that spiritual sense which is addressed when our Lord says to us, "Hear and your soul shall live?" What the sight that makes the light of the sun available, in comparison of that which enables us to rejoice in the

light of the Sun of Righteousness? When partaking of the Lord's Supper, I, by my bodily senses, take cognizance of the bread and wine, and know what they are, as I intentionally and consciously partake of them; while, with my spiritual nature, I deal with the spiritual realities which they symbolize, and discern the Lord's body broken for me, his blood shed for the remission of my sins, which I thankfully receive, and consciously feed upon, as the spiritual food of the divine life. The two processes are quite distinct. They are both experienced realities. In neither is there any mystery. In neither is any thing assumed to be what it is not felt and proved to be. If, as to the first part of this experience, I may have confidence enough in my bodily senses on their testimony to refuse to believe that what seemed bread and wine were not bread and wine, but were transubstantiated into the actual flesh and blood of Christ, I feel at least equally authorised in the confidence which justly accompanies the exercise of spiritual perception, to believe that the spiritual realities which I have spiritually discerned, the spiritual food of which I have consciously partaken, was just what to my spiritual apprehension it appeared; existing as a spiritual existence altogether in the region of spirit, and not clothed with a material form, or existing in the material substance which to the outward senses is bread and wine. Of course there is this difference between the contradiction to transubstantiation presented by the spiritual sense, and that which the bodily senses offer, that *all* see the bread and wine, and may feel entitled to say, "these are

but bread and wine," while the spiritual realities, to which they refer, are seen only by those who exercise spiritual vision, and know Christ, and find his flesh to be meat indeed, and his blood to be drink indeed. But, assuming that a man has both these preparations for dealing with this matter, and while his bodily senses bear to him the testimony that they bear to all men, that his spiritual eye is opened to see the appropriate food of eternal life presented to him in Christ, I believe that such a man's spiritual perceptions afford to him as direct a contradiction to the doctrine of transubstantiation as his physical perceptions do. Now, though the modifications of the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the elements to which I have referred, cease to contradict our bodily senses as directly as transubstantiation does, they still continue equally to contradict our spiritual perceptions, the perceptions which pertain to our higher nature, the perceptions which properly pertain to that region in which Christ and eternal life are seen and known.

Those who have gone along with me thus far may feel, that I have said enough to justify my estimate of the evil involved in interpreting the words of our Lord, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," as referring to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

Yet there may be some, who have such a lively sense of our mental limits, and so strong a feeling of the danger of refusing any statement that is made as on divine authority, because of our inability to form consistent and harmonious views in the matter to

which it refers, that they may be prepared to say, "No doubt the manner of faith, which receives the words, 'This is my body,' 'This is my blood,' as literally or mystically true of the bread and the wine, is distinct from the faith that receives Christ, nor is the exercise of the former within the region of spiritual intelligence. But may not both these faiths be required from us? May we not, as to our ordinary experience, be called to the direct faith of Christ, while as to the Lord's Supper we are called to faith in the mystery of his presence in the bread and the wine? And may not, as to both demands, the obedience of faith be due from us?"

I reply, that my difficulty is more truly practical than speculative, and that the extent of the evil involved in that to which I object, comes before me in its full magnitude, only when I make it a *practical question*, and suppose myself to attempt to meet with obedience both demands for faith, viz., that which the gospel makes, and that which the ordinance of the Lord's Supper thus conceived of makes.

The difficulty, the evil, is indeed *peculiarly a practical one*. Without anticipating the direct exposition of the meaning of feeding upon Christ, I ask you to endeavour to realize, using what materials for so doing your experience may afford, the consciousness that accompanies that obedience of faith, which is the reception of the gospel, your consciousness in receiving the record that God has given to us eternal life in his Son. In this exercise of faith, is not the eternal life seen by you in Christ? Are not its elements the objects of spiritual apprehension? Is

not their relation to your own inner man spiritually intelligible? Is not the movement of your own being in which you appropriate them a conscious movement? Is not the participation in eternal life that results, the being spiritually quickened, also a conscious experience? And, in all the variety of connection with outward means of grace in which this experience is known, is it not universally one and the same? In relation to joy or to sorrow, when engaged in active duty or in solitary meditation, dealing with men in the name of Christ or drawing near to the Father in that name, in all things is not Christ the same? eternal life the same? the renewing of your inner man essentially one process? that essential oneness being at once the reason of the command, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," and the ground of the assurance "that all things work together for good to them that love God." I ask you thus to realize the life of faith in its inward oneness, in its outward variety, and then to consider what you are required to combine with this experience, as being another manner of feeding upon Christ, and living by him, when you are called to believe that Christ, and eternal life, thus spiritually known to you, are presented to you also in the Lord's Supper in the bread and the wine. You may attempt to meet this requirement, but the combination proposed you will find impossible. You may pass from the one manner of faith to the other, but in so doing you will not be continuing to receive the one eternal life. The sap of the vine will not be felt to flow into you in the

exercise of this new faith, as it did in that of the faith which you have hitherto cherished. Proceed, with careful self-conscious discernment of the conditions of your own spirit, and you will speedily prove, that no setting yourself to believe about the bread and the wine, that Christ is in them literally or mystically, can feed that life into the fellowship of which the direct faith of Christ had introduced you, and which all exercise of the same faith had nourished and strengthened. Every other employment to which God has called you, and in which you have engaged as a christian man, has been found to be what you could so engage in, as in it to be conscientiously feeding upon Christ. But now that is proposed to you in which that consciousness can no longer accompany you; and, though it is commended to you, not only as a medium of participation in Christ, but as so peculiarly the medium of that participation, that the words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," are alleged to have been spoken with reference to it, participation in Christ, in the sense in which you have hitherto had experience of feeding upon him, you find that it does not yield to you. Though you submit your mind to the mystery presented to you—though you believe, however inconceivable the assumption seems, that Christ is in the bread and the wine—though you be contented to hold in abeyance, not your understanding only, but your spiritual perceptions also, and, if the form of the doctrine be transubstantiation, your bodily senses, still there is no consciousness of receiving meat which endureth unto

eternal life. Your present occupation with this mystery is in no degree found to add to what the meditation of the work of Christ has wrought in your spirit; nor does this gazing on darkness—however solemn and awful the darkness—forward that progress in the divine life to which you were conscious while beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord.

Thus is the difficulty greatest in the practical aspect of the subject, being the experience of the impossibility of feeding, through the faith of this mystery, that eternal life which has been quickened and nourished by the direct faith of Christ.

Yet I have said, as to what the Lord's Supper becomes, when the language of our Lord in the 6th chapter of John, with reference to the life of faith, is interpreted as the exposition of the nature and function of that ordinance, "so, ceasing to be a testimony to our relation to the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls, it has become, so to speak, the rival of that word as the food of eternal life;" and it may be asked, how can it be the rival of the living word as the food of eternal life, if practically it proves not to be food for that life at all?

Certainly this seeming contradiction could not arise *if the true conception of eternal life* were adhered to, and a *spiritual discernment freely exercised* as to the result of attempting to sustain that life by this manner of food. But, in point of fact, the seeming contradiction is presented to us, and it arises in this way. The recognition of this ordinance as the medium of eternal life, in virtue of the assumed actual presence of Christ in the bread and wine,

involves not *only* a *new manner of faith*, but also a *new conception of the nature of eternal life*. For it becomes necessary not only to believe that Christ is in that, in which by no exercise of any faculties of perception with which God has endowed man can he be discerned to be, but also to believe, that Christ is fed upon, while there is no consciousness of feeding upon him ; so that the fact of our being fed comes to be as much taken on trust, as the fact of Christ's presence in that which we eat and drink, both facts being alike assumed as parts of the one mystery. The absence, therefore, of that consciousness which has accompanied all our previous experience of partaking in eternal life, is no argument against the claim made for the ordinance to be the medium of that life, if the conception of the ordinance which is presented to us be fully received. Only, as I have said, a new conception of eternal life comes to be called for, as well as a new kind of faith, for the relation of the life of Christ to the spirit of Christ must cease to be conceived of as we have conceived of it ; and consciousness must cease to be regarded as the necessary accompaniment of its reception. But, all this being granted, as a man believes that Christ is in the bread and the wine, so he believes that, having partaken of the bread and the wine, he has fed upon Christ ; and to take his experience, in partaking of the ordinance, to the light of his previous experience in feeding upon Christ by faith, is to seek light, where the essential character of the experience is—taking upon trust in the dark. In this view, to ask myself “am I consciously fed ?” in reference to the

claim of the ordinance to be the food of eternal life, is as irrelevant as it would be to ask myself, "Do I discern Christ's presence in the bread and the wine?"

And thus an ordinance which does not consciously feed eternal life, may become, and does become, the rival of the engrafted word which does; because the faith exercised dispenses with such consciousness, and permits and authorizes the conviction, that without that consciousness we are experiencing the fulfilment of these words, "whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life."

I say the ordinance may become, and does become the rival of the living word. For this I believe to be the true conception of the relation in which they come to stand to each other; and that the ultimate ground of objection to that conception of the ordinance against which I contend is, that it thus makes it the antagonist of Christ.

Viewed on the side on which I have at present approached it, such a rival to the true bread of life may appear little formidable; for I have contemplated its claims as they will appear to one having experience of the life of faith, and clear discernment of the nature of that life. One so prepared to deal with the subject, ought not to be in much danger. But, in the absence of such experience, or, what is possible, even where there is a measure of that experience, in the absence of such discernment, the danger is not small.

I have spoken of the powerlessness of the faith of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, to yield to the spirit of man what the direct faith of Christ

yields; but I have not spoken of what it has power to yield. I have used the expression "solemn and awful darkness" in speaking of that on which this faith calls us to gaze, instead of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. How solemn and awful we may not easily realize when not actually (as we dare not be,) cherishing the faith of that mystery. But we can understand, that to believe that Christ is in the bread and the wine, is to see these material substances invested with an over-awing divinity, before which our souls prostrate themselves as before God; that to proceed to take the material substance of which we so conceive into our lips, is to perform an act of deep mysterious interest, with which there naturally are combined thoughts of marvellous condescension on the part of God—of inconceivable obligation on our own part; and that to reflect on what has taken place, and that now that word is fulfilled in us—"whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day," is to feel emboldened to cherish peace and confident hope as to the invisible and the eternal: while all this combination of awe, and thankfulness, and triumphant hope, is sealed to us by the persuasion, that to doubt the reality of the grounds on which it rests, would be to doubt the power and truth of God.

Now here are elements of an experience which, while it has no claim to be called christian experience or fellowship in the life of Christ, may yet too easily be accepted as religion, and earnest and solemn religion too, even where christian experience is not

unknown. How much more easily where serious emotions, and experiences of awe and veneration, are all that the human spirit has yet recognised in itself as religion ; and of how many, esteemed by themselves and by others, religious, may this be all that can be said !

But what enhances the danger and makes it to extend widely is, that however antagonistic this faith of Christ's presence in the ordinance is to the direct faith of Christ, revealed in us the hope of glory, and however antagonistic this taking for granted that we are partaking in the food of eternal life, is to looking for and resting in the testimony of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, still it is *not* as something *instead of*, but as something *besides* the faith of the gospel that the faith of this mystery is inculcated ; and so men not discerning the contradiction, may attempt to combine both.

I believe such an attempt to be the attempt to serve two masters. If any reply and say, "no, for surely some have combined both ;" if this be spoken with reference to men of God within the Romish church, or other churches holding cognate views in this matter, I say the day of the Lord will reveal what has been indeed that feeding upon Christ through which they have come to bear his image—what of that which they held determined what they were, and what had no part in that result. But, besides, let us not forget the practical contradictions that living men present. Our Lord says, "No man can serve God and mammon ;" and yet, though

there is this inherent contradiction between the service of God and that of mammon, the history of the individual mind, even when its prevailing character may be the serving of God, may present much serving of mammon also, and that too, in forms of self deception which permit the service of mammon to appear the service of God.

As to the two services which I have at present characterised *as two*, and *mutually opposed*, there is abundant historical evidence, that in proportion as the food of life is believed to be received in the bread and wine, it is less and less sought through belief of the truth. Nay, in proportion as that is conceived of as the highest act of religion, and that in which there is assumed to be the most absolute participation in Christ, which is most entirely away from the region of consciousness and of spiritual discernment, that region loses its interest, and men withdraw from it; and we find them more and more speaking of it as a region of mists and uncertainties, a region in which no clear light shines, a region where no voice gives forth a certain sound, or speaks with authority; insomuch, that he who would know certainty, and feel his feet on a rock, is told that he must turn elsewhere than inward; and so the voice of the living word being treated as an uncertain sound, the way is prepared for obedience to an external authority, and the perplexed spirit seeking repose and rest, is fain to welcome the infallible church, and, in despair of attaining to the light of spiritual vision, to still itself and be silent in the darkness of implicit faith. I may not wait to trace this leavening process further.

To me it appears, that there is a mutual relation between this doctrine of the real presence and the doctrine of the infallibility of the church of a most instructive and warning kind; and that, while the belief of the real presence invests the church, which inculcates it, with the highest claim on the homage of the faithful that can be conceived, that belief could never have been offered to men but by a church claiming to be infallible, or be received but in the faith of that infallibility.

But, apart from the testimony of observation or history, looking at the subject in the clear light of the life of Christ, I can have no doubt as to the true character of that against which I contend. For I can have no doubt that the attitude of the human spirit in cherishing the faith of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, and in assuming that partaking of them is partaking of Christ, *is not any form of obedience to the words*—"abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me:" or the words—"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life:" or the words—"receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls:" and, therefore, neither can I doubt that, not being any form of that obedience of faith which is thus called for, and yet making the high and solemn claim which it does make, its relation to that obedience of faith is that of a substitute and counterfeit. When Luther, at one stage in his progress, said, that "if the Pope

would permit him to preach justification by faith, he would not object to the Mass," he understood not how certainly justification by faith is subversive of the mass, and of all conceptions of the Lord's Supper which have a common root with the mass, and which ask, for the right participation in that ordinance, a faith so alien to that which receives the gospel of the grace of God. Those with whom Luther contended had an instinctive feeling—probably beyond their own clear intelligence in the matter—of the danger to which his preaching of justification by faith exposed the whole hold of their church upon the minds of men, and above all, that which they felt, and feel, and justly feel to be their strongest hold of men—that mass to which he thus disclaimed hostility. The fear at present entertained, by those whose confidence is justification by faith, of the leaven of Romanism working in the land may be more instinctive than intelligent; traditional also it may be—doubtless is with many; while in many, we may hope, it is the discernment that this is another gospel, which yet is not a gospel. But, whether more or less enlightened, I believe that the fear does not in degree exceed the danger, nor, however inoperative, and therefore innocuous the doctrine of the real presence may have been, received by tradition and held among the mere forms of thought, can I, when it is seen, as now, attracting awakened minds, and sought unto for comfort and hope towards God, and renewal of strength for the daily conflict of life, regard it but as evil beyond the worst apprehensions which it has awakened. Christ is the desire of all

nations. All have in them a craving which Christ alone can truly satisfy. Yet, alas ! how often is this desire unenlightened, unguided, just that which moves men to meet, with hasty and unwarranted response, the cry, "Lo ! here is Christ, lo ! there is Christ !" The warning of our Lord in regard to that cry—"Go not after them, nor follow them," may have reference to other and yet future forms of danger to his church ; but according to the spirit of that warning do I believe it to be, to treat the assumption of the actual presence of Christ in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, as one form of that danger.

I have used the name, "the Mass," as that given to the Lord's Supper in the church of Rome, while I have only referred to part of what constitutes the Mass of Romanism, and gives its high place to that service in the worship of Romanists. For the Mass consists of two parts : first, that receiving and feeding upon the material substance, assumed to be transubstantiated into the body and blood of the Lord, which corresponds to what Protestants call the communion ; and secondly, the offering up to God in worship, and as the mean of procuring the highest outcomings of divine mercy, that same material substance as to which this faith is cherished, which is called the unbloody sacrifice, or eucharistic offering of Christ. And this second part of the service of the Mass attracted fully more of the attention of the reformers than the first ; for it took to their minds the form of a renewal of sacrificial offering for sin, to the depreciation of the one and all-sufficient

offering of Christ, who, once in the end of the world, hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Now, the eucharistic offering appears to me a natural development of the Lord's Supper, *seen in the light of transubstantiation*; and as such I would now notice it, because the appearance of this development still farther illustrates how the faith of the doctrine of the real presence renders participation in the ordinance a substitute for, instead of a witness to the life of faith.

That which was believed to be, through transubstantiation, the body and blood of the Lord, men fed upon as the food of eternal life. They then proceeded further to offer it in the eucharistic offering to God, that he might accept it as their highest worship, and might, in acceptance of it, manifest the highest grace, (for, doubtless, that effect on the condition of spirits out of the body, which they contemplate in that offering, they regarded as the highest form of answer to prayer.) I ask, is not this, as a whole, consistent with itself, and the second part a natural development of the first? I trust you regard the whole subject with too solemn a sense of its importance, to deal lightly with any part of it, because of its incongruity with our habits of thought. If Christ is conceived to be so truly present, where to sense is but a material substance, that he may therein be fed upon by the human spirit; to one so conceiving, what coming to God in the name of Christ, or asking mercies for Christ's sake, or presenting of Christ to the Father as the ground of

•

expectation of the answer of prayer, can be more fitting than that of the eucharistic offering? Feeding upon Christ, and worshipping God through Christ, are so related, that what we understand to be the first of these will always determine our conception of the other also. With very different measures of spiritual apprehension are the expressions—"accepting Christ as a Saviour,"—"receiving him as the bread of life, which hath come down from heaven,"—employed by Protestants; which may be also said of our use of the expressions—"praying in Christ's name,"—"trusting for the answer of our prayers to Christ's merits," but the meaning of the former language, as used by any individual, determines, as to his use of it, the meaning of the latter also. As these two several attitudes of the human spirit are related to each other in the experience of Protestants, so to Romanists are the two parts of the service of the Mass mutually related. The parallel between what we know in ourselves, and what we see in the Mass, will be more and more apparent to us in proportion as our experience of Christianity is more truly the fellowship of the life of Christ. What we receive from God, in Christ, as eternal life, is what, being fed upon, and so becoming our own actual life, we offer to God in worship. Our life ascends to God in worship. And it is its being the divine nature—its being the eternal life, that is the secret of the acceptableness of the worship, and of the sureness of the response to it. The *life* which we are living is *lived*, so to speak, *in our being led by the Spirit of God*, and, therefore, the *worshipping form* of this life is,

worship in spirit and in truth. We are *born of the will of God*, and we, therefore, *ask things according to His will, and He heareth us.* Thus is it the mind of Christ which we present to the Father. Thus is Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, and was accepted as the one and sufficient sacrifice for sin, presented anew in all prayers of Christians, in so far as these are a participation in the spirit of Christ—a form of the life of Christ in them. “To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious; ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Knowing thus, in ourselves, the relation which the spiritual reality of worship bears to the spiritual reality of feeding upon Christ, we understand how the belief of the doctrine of the actual presence has produced the Mass of Romanism *in both its parts*, and see, in the eucharistic offering, the substitute for that worship which is in spirit and in truth, as we saw in the other part of the service, in which the consecrated material substance is partaken of, the substitute for receiving with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save the soul.

The completeness of this parallelism greatly tends to confirm the conviction, that the one of these objects of contemplation is the counterpart of the other; and at the same time to strengthen the fear that, if the counterpart once begin to awaken an interest, and to be felt something to the mind because of what seeming religious feeling the faith of

it sustains, its self-consistency and harmonious development will enable it to insinuate itself until it is received as a whole, and takes hold of the mind by all its parts. And of the likelihood of this there is striking evidence in the fact, that *forms of thought* as to the Lord's Supper, one in nature with the faith of the Church of Rome, are just now seen developing themselves *into forms of service* that suggest the Mass, and are awakening on this ground the distrust of Protestants.

I have endeavoured to do all the justice which one not holding them can, to the views to which I have objected; and their completeness and self-consistency in that system in which they are fully developed, has made this not difficult: so that I hope that any intelligent Romanist would have no hesitation in recognizing the accuracy of my representation. I believe, also, that those in whom that tendency to Romanism, which at present awakens so much attention, is manifested, will recognize themselves in what I have intended as the statement of their mental position, however they may feel confident that still they run no risk of ending in Romanism, or however they may satisfy themselves with the line of separation which they draw between themselves and Romanists.

But the root of that which has been fully developed only in the Mass of Romanism, is present, and manifests its presence in Protestants much more widely than the limits of this movement, and may be discerned even in those sects of the Protestant Church

which have gone furthest in their protest against the Church of Rome. And I fear I dare not assume, that all those whose case this may be, will easily recognize the application of what I have said to themselves. On the contrary, all such self-application is likely to be precluded, by the strong recoil from Romanism to which they are conscious. So long as the Mass offends them, as both superstitious and idolatrous, how can they suspect that the elements of the interest which the Mass has to Romanists, are present in the interest with which they themselves regard the Lord's Supper? So small is the likelihood that to those whose mental position this is, my word will come with the arresting personal application, "Thou art the man," that I had almost withheld from the attempt so to press it home. But my remembrance of the comfort not in Christ, nor in the true communion of his body and blood, which I have witnessed in connection with the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, where there has not been the least misgiving as to the truly Protestant character of the service, is too painful, and my sense of the danger to the spirits of men which it involved too deep, to permit me to conclude without making some effort to awaken conscience in this solemn matter.

I have said, "comfort not in Christ, nor in the true communion of his body and blood." I use this language with reference to comfort experienced through partaking of the Lord's Supper, which does not flow from the exercise of faith in Christ, but from a vague persuasion of benefit derived from the ordinance itself, because of some assumed virtue in it

to promote man's peace with God, and strengthen the hold of the soul on Christ; which persuasion, however undefined its grounds, invests the ordinance with the interest and importance of a medium of participation in Christ, and means of salvation, and clothes the act of communion with a character of peculiar solemnity and peculiar acceptableness to God as a religious service; so that the communion table is left with a sense of relief to the conscience, and a strengthened hope of the forgiveness of sins. When a manner of comfort, the crude elements of which I thus endeavour to indicate, is derived from the fact of participation in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, those so comforted being persons to whom the true spiritual apprehension of Christ is unknown, it is too manifest that the place given to the ordinance is that of a substitute for the actual life of faith, and not, as it ought to be, of a witness to that life; for partaking in it is not—does not profess to be—a testimony as to what Christ is proved to be from day to day, a testimony as to the secret of a continuous life, of which Christ is the food. On the contrary, it is clearly had recourse to as affording some vague mystical hope of keeping up through it an interest in Christ,—that Christ of a knowledge of whom the ordinary life gives no token. Surely the elements of the Mass are present in the Lord's Supper so used. And that it is widely so used in all the sects of Protestants, those in each several sect who know most of vital Christianity will be the most prepared to admit.

I doubt not that observant intelligent Romanists

mark the same fact. To them, indeed, that fact will appear in a very different light from that in which it appears to me. They will regard it, as indicating how Christians, in all sects of Protestants, are, though they know it not, feeling the need of that which the Church of Rome alone has to give. They will look on these elements of the feelings, with which they themselves regard the Mass, thus showing themselves in connection with a form of doctrine, on the subject of the Lord's Supper, the most opposite to theirs, as proving how deep in humanity that craving is, which thus utters its voice, in spite of all intellectual protest against it, in creeds and catechisms. And from a considerable depth in man it surely does come. For not of the visible, nor of man's temporal interests, nor of his relation to the creature does that voice speak; but of the invisible, of the eternal, of man's relation to God. Therefore is a certain reverence and consideration due to it. Yet, assuredly, that voice is not from the depths of humanity—those depths of which the Psalmist speaks, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." That which utters itself thus widely, and not unfrequently with much earnestness and solemnity, still is not the experienced sense of the deepest ultimate need of man. It pertains not to that depth in which the pure craving for Christ arises—in respect of which Christ is the desire of all nations. It asks, indeed, for a hold of the invisible and the eternal; but it does so with mere fleshly negative conceptions of these, as the unknown opposites of seen and temporal; and not, *as* apprehending in the spiritual, the essentially

invisible and eternal. Though it demands a religion and solemn transactions with God, it can be contented with assumed transactions with an unknown God. It offers homage to the Almighty and Omniscient, as from felt weakness and ignorance; but the sense of weakness and ignorance confessed, though such as would manifest itself in prostration of the human spirit at the presence of a miracle and a mystery, is not what expects to have divine strength perfected in man's weakness, or looks for light to the fountain of light,—the "soul waiting for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." The recognition of sin, and the anxiety for an interest in the atonement manifested, may have a certain measure of truth in them; but they amount not to the spiritual apprehension of the awful reality of man's alienation from God, and therefore they permit the cherishing of a peace which is not true peace—is not oneness with God—is not the experience of the power of the blood of Christ to purge the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. Some sense of the unsheltered feeling of an intelligent being, realising that there is a supreme ruler of the universe, and yet having no hold of his favour, that voice utters, and with some welcome for any guidance in a path on which that favour may be assumed to rest; but that voice indicates not that deeper sense of desolation which pertains to the human spirit yet ignorant of God—the sense of being an orphan while God is not known as a Father, and which prepares a welcome for Him who comes to reveal the Father. Thus coming short in all respects of the true sense of that

need of men which is met by the grace of God in the gift of Christ, this craving of the mind has no authority, and however tenderly it may be right to deal with it as it may be connected with some measure of awakenedness on the subject of religion, we can only regard its clothing the Lord's Supper among protestants with that practical interest which attaches to the Mass of Romanism, as one among the many instances of its influence in substituting superstition for religion; for what, in truth, is this craving, but that sense of the necessity for a religion, combined with spiritual ignorance of God, which has made man so universally a worshipping being, and yet left him not a worshipper in spirit and in truth.

The difficulty I have felt in saying what the nature of the comfort is, which is found in the Lord's Supper, when that comfort is derived simply from participation in the ordinance, and not from the direct faith of Christ, has arisen from this, that that comfort has not, as in the case of the Romanist, a doctrinal foundation, but is really in contradiction to the doctrinal system of those who still cherish it. And this fact presents also the great difficulty in endeavouring to carry their own convictions along with me. They never say distinctly to themselves why or how they expect good from this ordinance, and therefore though another may correctly interpret their feelings for them, they will be slow to receive an interpretation of these feelings which contradicts their system. Yet, if any thing I have said cause *any* to stand in doubt of themselves in this matter,

let me suggest to them to press themselves home with such questions as these:—

1. Does the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in your meditation of it, speak to you of Christ? or does it commend itself? Does it suggest what, altogether apart from it, you possess in him? or does it promise as to what of him you are to receive through it? Does it turn your thoughts to Christ as the true interest of all things, the meat which endureth unto eternal life, to be discerned and fed upon in all occupations of your being? or does it concentrate your interest on itself as the specially appointed medium of your participation in him?

2. Is the act of participation in the ordinance, as it is your own act, what you consciously feel to be, and would have others to recognize as being, the exponent and manifestation of your ordinary manner of existence as a Christian man? or is it an act which has as its object to make good for you a claim to be a Christian man? Is it in harmony with the words, "This do in remembrance of me,"—"Ye do show the Lord's death till he come," a testimony concerning Christ which your personal knowledge of him qualifies you to give? or is it an act which these words of the apostle neither describe nor interpret, not being of the nature of a testimony at all, but having its whole import in the participation in Christ assumed to be through that act itself?

3. Is the benefit which you believe yourself to derive from this ordinance resolvable into a quickened faith in Christ as your life, a fuller purpose of heart in cleaving to the Lord, a more vivid realization of

your own position, as one who is dead, and whose life is hid with Christ in God? or is what sense of benefit you cherish referable to your persuasion that, in some way which you understand not, you have by the act of communion strengthened your hold of Christ; along with, it may be, that feeling of sacredness and worship, which associates itself with all exercise of awe and veneration, and prostration of the spirit before God, even though the unknown God?

I know that questions such as these, in so far as they suggest the desirable answer, are apt to be leading questions to all self-justifying spirits, but this risk is unavoidable, and they may be helpful to those who are really honest with themselves.

The way in which I have just now and throughout spoken of awe and veneration, and the sense of mystery, may suggest the question, "And is it not a commendation of a doctrine or an ordinance, that it provides exercise for awe and veneration? and indeed is not prostration of our reason in the presence of divine mysteries an element in all worship."

I have heard it said, that "worship begins where knowledge ends." I cannot receive this proposition: yet it is not without some relation to truth; inasmuch as, though worship does not begin where knowledge ends, it still does not end where knowledge ends, but always goes consciously beyond knowledge. But, if it be indeed spiritual worship, it is to be described no less justly as worship in the truth, than as worship in the spirit; nay, because it is in the spirit, therefore it is in the truth; for in giving us of His Spirit, it is that God enables us to worship Him

in spirit and in truth. Not by darkness, but by light, is the deepest and most intimate awe awakened in us. That we may be such worshippers as the Father seeketh, we are brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light. The spiritual objects visible to us in that light, awe us because of what they are spiritually seen to be. Nor is their infinity and our felt inability to comprehend them absolutely, and our feeling that on all hands they go beyond us, an experience which, properly speaking, demands prostration of reason. On the contrary, this experience is that of the highest exercise of reason; spiritually enlightened reason, sustaining and justifying worship; justifying worship because of what is known; justifying it beyond what is known, because of the believed expansion of what is known beyond knowledge. God is light. In his light he gives us to see light; and to the spiritual eye light is sweet, and is felt to be light, though in its infinite intensity, it be light inaccessible. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and knoweth God; while yet it is said of the love of God, that it passeth knowledge. Nay, as to the divine power put forth in the accomplishing of the divine will in us, that mighty working whereby it is said God subdueth all things unto himself, the apostle's trust in it is based on experimental knowledge; "according," says he, "to the power which worketh in us;" while yet his expectation from it goes beyond knowledge. He trusts in God, as "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Earnest continued meditation, on what, with no

purpose of awakening prejudice, by the sound of a word certainly, but merely as best expressing my own conception, I have called, in reference to feeding upon Christ as the bread of life, a substitute or counterfeit, may have given a minuteness to my perception and detail of the points which are at once those of parallelism and of difference beyond what will awaken interest. Yet I have endeavoured to include the full circle of those to whom the question is a personal one, by dealing with the germ and root of the evil, and not merely with its developed forms. To my mind, the circle thus embraced is a very large one, though the extent of injury sustained be very various; that same error, as is often the case with error, which in some is influential enough to characterize their mental position, being present in others only as a very subordinate, though still hurtful element in their religion.

I have one word to add which concerns us all. I have acknowledged the awe and veneration which are often present in connection with the error which I have been considering, and have endeavoured to indicate how it should be so; while I have vindicated the claim of spiritual light to be the proper source of awe to the human spirit. But why are awe and veneration, as they may be the accompaniments of superstition, so imposing? Why are seriousness, self-restraint, and absorption in religion so easily assumed to imply true piety? Doubtless in part, because thought and feeling on the subject of religion are in general so superficial, that most men when they see an earnest devout man, see one who

has gone further in the direction of religion than themselves. He is to them as one listening to a voice which they are disregarding, yet feel that they ought to give heed to also; a voice that comes from a greater depth in man than the voices which they are allowing to engross their attention; and that, as we have seen, it is not a voice from the real ultimate depths of man's being they may easily fail to discern. But the voice that comes from that ultimate depth is also in men's ears as well as that other. Man is spoken to from within as to what is religion, as truly and as universally as he is as to the necessity for a religion. In truth, what I have spoken of as a voice from a less depth is, in so far as it is a true voice, but that voice from the ultimate depth imperfectly heard. Therefore, however indiscriminating may be the testimony to mere seriousness which the thoughtless give, we might expect that the presence of a seriousness which arose from true religion, and was obedience to the voice within clearly understood, would lead men to discriminate in this matter, and would draw from them the acknowledgment, that this and not that was what they themselves should be, though they are not. I believe that such an expectation is so far warranted, that at least it would make a considerable difference; and that therefore we may say that the fact to which I refer is also in part to be explained by this other fact, that men have so little help of living epistles of the grace of God; the number of such being comparatively so small, and of those that are, the light so feeble.

Let us then seek in this view to realize our calling

and our shortcoming. We must believe that the awe and veneration experienced in taking into a man's lips a material substance, which he regards as literally or mystically the body and blood of the Lord, are lean and barren emotions compared with the awe and veneration which accompany conscious feeding upon the living word—the being consciously led by the Spirit of God. The apostle regards "fear and trembling" as the emotions which naturally attend the faith that "God is working in us:" and surely nothing can be conceived more solemn than the sense of being in the hand of God, as clay in the hand of the potter, as this may be spoken of a spirit suggesting what we would imagine, were such a thing possible, as the solemn consciousness of man receiving from God his being at first, with the additional solemnity of the sense of personal responsibility for yielding himself to God. Such an habitual consciousness as that of being spiritually new made—"created anew in Christ Jesus,"—must be the fountain of an habitual awe and solemnity, to which the participation, from time to time, in the consecrated elements, can bear no comparison in degree, any more than in kind; and certainly the manifestation of these feelings should come to others with a proportionally greater weight of authority, commanding in them a clearer inward testimony. Let us therefore consider what, in this respect, is due from us to our fellow men, and what manner of protection from error, in this great question as to the bread of life, we are thus called to afford to them. One instance of the manifested power of the habitual consciousness of

finding Christ's flesh meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, presented within the circle of those with whom they live, is of inestimably higher value to men than many and clear arguments against the error of the doctrine of the actual presence, and all modifications of it. Let this consideration combine with all else that calls upon us to abide in Christ. Let us seek to abide in him, that men may see in us what manner of awe and veneration dwelling in the light of life awakens. Christians are children of the light and of the day. Light, therefore, is of their birthright. Let our claim to this high birthright be made practically. Let us walk in the light, and let men learn in us that so to do is not to lean to our own understanding, or to exalt our own intelligence; that, on the contrary, this is the true prostration of the human spirit before the Father of spirits, who also is the Father of lights. Let the form of our claim to implicit faith be, our ready reception of that word the entrance of which giveth light. Let the illustration we offer of the humility that receives the kingdom of heaven as a little child be, not rest in ignorance, but teachableness—"the opening of the ear as the learner," as is prophetically spoken of our Lord.

While we thus propose to ourselves to vindicate, against all that would usurp its place, the claims of the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls, simply by ourselves receiving that word with meekness, trusting to the assurance of Christ—"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit,"—let us be prepared to meet with many disappointments. In the measure in which, through

abiding in Christ, we bear fruit, we shall be offering to men help—important help, but they will not necessarily profit by it, and we must be contented to go forward through ill report as steadily as through good report. And let us remember how high a thing we are attempting, not only in order that even a little success may encourage us, but also that we may not wonder that it is comparatively so little. The question which we press upon men is not that between religion and no religion; it is the closer question between true religion and what usurps the name. Now I believe that two things have progressed together in this country, viz.: an increased realization of the importance of having a religion, and an increased readiness to regard all earnest, serious religion as to be held in the same estimation. In proportion as this is the condition of men's minds, being helpful to them in the way of which I speak, will be difficult. But if indeed we be on God's side, God will acknowledge us: it is not for us to seek to know when, or to what extent. Let us cast ourselves into the treasury of the Lord. The offering will be much according as it approaches to being all that we have, even all our living. Alas! our offering being thus weighed in the scales of the sanctuary, will not our continual burden be, that it is not greater, rather than that our God does not use it more? Let me record it as my painful, humbling experience, that, in now dealing with error I have felt myself continually obliged to take it to the light of the ideal of Christianity, that which shines from actual Christianity being too feeble for my need.

PART II.

JOHN iv. 7—34.

THERE cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? (for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto

her, I that speak unto thee am he. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.”—PSALM XXIII. 5.

“I AM,” says our Lord, “the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” “Anticipating,” says the Romanist, “the unbelieving Protestant.” Nay, rather, as we believe, looking at the subject of the Lord’s discourse with that fleshly mind, to which the mind that applies his words to the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, and finds in the doctrine of transubstantiation a solution of their difficulty, is most akin. Not that they understood the Lord’s words, but would not believe them, was the sin of the Jews; but that, murmuring among themselves, and leaning to their own understanding instead of being taught of God, they understood them not. In assuming that what the Lord called upon the Jews to believe, was what they call

what we have been seeing to be the essence of receiving as a Saviour him who, "being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

If, in seeking light on the subject of feeding upon Christ, we study the records of the hidden life of christian men, which the journals which they have so often kept present to us, and which are doubtless a part of the riches of the Church, we shall have our attention engaged with much that does not seem to pertain to the region of the will at all; and more especially when need of Christ, and appropriation of Christ, and comfort and peace experienced through such appropriation, are spoken of, the language employed is altogether unrelated to the will. We meet confession of sin—rejection of trust in self—realization of the freeness of divine grace, and of the warrant to have confidence towards God through Christ, through what he has done and suffered, through his atonement, through his merits, acceptance of the free grace thus realized—consent of heart and complacency in this way of salvation,—all this we meet: but nothing that places before us such actings of the human will as I have now spoken of, and for which I have claimed that they and they alone are, strictly speaking, acts of feeding upon Christ, acts of living by him as he by the Father. We meet nothing that indicates discernment of a will of God for man revealed in Christ—a human will one with the divine will—with the expression of an apprehension of this will as "the bread of life which hath come down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall never

die." We meet no record of acts of feeding upon this will by the doing of it, accompanied by the consciousness that such calling of Jesus Lord is the true experience of feeding upon him. We meet the record of no experience that expresses itself by using language in reference to the Lord's will, such as he uses as to the Father's will when he says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me," or that suggests, as being a living illustration of its reality, that connection on which I have dwelt so much of these words with the words, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Such record of eating the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinking his blood, we meet not; and yet such feeding upon Christ there must have been, if indeed we are reading of branches abiding in Christ the vine, and living by his life; of men of whom it was true that, in living the lives recorded, they lived, yet not they, but Christ in them; of men whom the law of the spirit of the life that is in Christ was making free from the law of sin and death. If of such men we are reading the acts of will, which I have recognized as acts of feeding upon Christ, must, however unexpressed, still have been present, underlying all that is expressed, the fruit and result of all that occupation of thought and heart, with the grace of God, which is expressed; and I would venture to add, the real ultimate ground and reason of all the peace and confidence before God which we see cherished, being that in the human spirits before us to which the Divine Spirit has borne testimony; for, in so far as

the Divine Spirit bore testimony to their spirits that they were the children of God, it must have been because—"as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God."

How has it come to pass that men spiritually alive should record so much concerning their own inward life, and not have led us to this inmost ultimate point of the contact of their will with the will of Christ, and submission to it, as the secret of that life? The explanation is partly in the history itself of this bending of the will, viz.: that it is the effect of a spiritual apprehension of Christ which naturally occupies more attention than this its effect; so that the man who, through beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, is changed into the same image, is more occupied with the glory which he is beholding than with the change in himself which it is making; and yet would that glory give him no peace but in working that change. Let him but be disobedient to the heavenly vision, and his peace will forthwith depart. This is partly the explanation. But, doubtless, the explanation is in part also, and chiefly, to be found, in the case of the Christians with whose diaries we are most familiar in this country, and to these I specially refer, in the fact of a departure from the simplicity that is in Christ, in their conceptions of justification by faith, and of the way in which faith excludes boasting. That, in so many instances, the form of thought and language alone should bear the impress of such error, while the condition of the heart and spirit is manifestly in harmony with the counsel of God in Christ, is a seeming contradiction,

for which we must be thankful. These are instances in which true elements of thought on the subject of salvation have neutralized error ; in which also, doubtless, the spiritual quickening of conscience has protected from danger beyond the discernment of the intellect, and saved true and earnest spirits, seeking peace with the Father of spirits, and harmony—harmony and peace to be found only in consistency with the laws of his spiritual kingdom. “How can two walk together excepting they be agreed.” “There is no communion between light and darkness.” “If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.” “If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.” “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world.” True peace can only have been attained in harmony with these laws of the kingdom of God, whether the language of those who seem partakers in such peace make direct reference to them, or do not.

But what are these quotations from the sacred volume but records of the original christian experience, that of those who first trusted in Christ? And what are we taught by this direct reference to that participation in the life of Christ, and oneness of will with God in him, in speaking of their peace toward God, on the part of the early Christians, while we are not accustomed to it among ourselves? Why, among us, are we left to infer, as I have been now doing, such participation and oneness as the ultimate essence

of the confidence cherished,—because it must be so ; and to infer this, I may say, in the face of the sound and of the literal import of the language used ? I have suggested as one reason of that absence of recognition of the state of the individual's own will, as connected with confidence toward God, which we meet with in the christian diaries with which we are most familiar, that the Christian is more occupied with the apprehension of Christ which affects his will, than with the consciousness that his will is affected. But, doubtless, this reason existed at the first as well as now ; and yet the apostle, as the most natural utterance of his experience, speaks of both together, “ We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.” Therefore the other reason which I suggested, viz. : a departure from the simplicity that is in Christ, in the conceptions entertained of justification by faith, and of the way in which faith excludes boasting, demands the more attention ; for we cannot treat as of small account any difference of apprehension in such a matter between ourselves and the apostle, and those who saw in the same light with him, of such magnitude as to impress itself on the language of christian men speaking of their inner life, and of their peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ ; nor can we feel that we have full communion with these first Christians, until we find their language the natural expression of our experiences. In truth, although we believe that many have really found life in feeding upon the will of

Christ, while expressing their hope toward God in language that would, strictly interpreted, imply, that to them feeding upon Christ consisted in the acknowledgment of Christ's work for them, and not in thus receiving his life to be their life, it is impossible not to fear that many more, not protected by an awakened conscience and quickened spiritual apprehension, have come short of the salvation that is in Christ, through placing such mental reference to the work of Christ in the place of that obedience of the will to Christ, in accomplishing which the knowledge of him and of his work saves. The day of the Lord will make manifest to what extent the true feeding upon Christ has thus been hindered. What I recognize in the record of primitive Christianity—what I desire to see, but do not see, even in some of the most unequivocal records of living Christianity with us, is, the acknowledgment of the *directness of the demand which the gospel makes on the will.*

I say, the acknowledgment of the *directness* of the demand which the gospel makes on the will. For an *indirect* effect upon the will is admitted, is indeed contended for. "The faith," it is said, "which saves, also sanctifies. It produces not peace and confidence towards God alone, but also holiness. Not merely is the work of Christ trusted in: his example is also followed. Not only is forgiveness of sin received through his blood, but deliverance from the power of sin by the Spirit is also God's gift to us in him; and we have no right to regard our faith as a saving faith unless its soundness be proved by the fruit which it bears." Nor am I insensible to much good

that has resulted from this manner of teaching, much gain to the cause of righteousness; that is, I mean, in reference to what would have been the result, if the first half in all this had been insisted upon, without the second; if what has been called justification had been insisted on without what has been called sanctification. The addition has been a concession to the demand of conscience; and has of course been valuable in proportion as it has been interpreted by an enlightened and quickened conscience. But still the evil has been great. Two things have been spoken of where there is but one thing; laborious efforts at harmony made where identity should be recognised; and a complexity embarrassing to the spirit has been introduced, instead of the simplicity that is in Christ.

This is the testimony of God concerning his Son, "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." To receive this testimony, and be taught of God, is spiritually to apprehend eternal life, as manifested in the Son of God, and given to us in him. The practical demand which in this light is felt to press upon us is, that we welcome this life to be our life; the trust in Christ called for is, that we feed on him as the bread of life; for trust in food is to use it as food, expecting to be nourished by it. Spiritual, doubtless, and as spiritual, to be only spiritually discerned, is this way of salvation; but exceedingly simple in the conception of it. The eternal life lived by our Lord as the Son of Man, is apprehended as the gift of God to man—to us,—therefore our proper life given to us that we may live it.

We see it divine, but we see it human also, the life of Christ. We accept the free gift of God, and yield up our will to the will of Christ, our spirit to his spirit; and the end of our God is accomplished. We live: we live the eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness, or record, in himself." We are become living epistles of the grace of God. It is now recorded in our being that God has given to man eternal life in his Son. It is recorded in our being, inasmuch as we are alive with the eternal life given in the Son of God. Here, I say, is one thing, not two, but one, simple and uncompounded—a life given; that life received—lived. The elements of this life we may conceive of as many, but as a life it is one thing—the one thing needful; and as it is one thing, so to receive it is one movement of our being, implies one direction of our attention, one thought, one care. With a single eye we may look at it; with a simple and entire purpose of heart cleave to it. What is the relation of this one thing to the two things of which I have spoken? What is this receiving of eternal life, this feeding upon Christ, this accepting his will to be our will, this esteeming the elements of his life in humanity, the mind that was in him, his flesh and his blood, to be meat indeed and drink indeed—what is it in reference to these two great objects of attention, so carefully distinguished, so laboriously and anxiously harmonized? Is it justification? Is it sanctification? Is it trust in the work of Christ—that trust which is so carefully separated from every element of self-consciousness or recognition of any

thing acceptable to God in the spiritual condition of the individual? or is it the culture of christian graces—that culture of them to which a man sets himself as to an employment altogether distinct from his trusting in Christ for salvation? It cannot be both of these, if we hold to the distinguishing definitions which are so carefully insisted upon. It is not in fact either, as we shall immediately see if we attempt to make it fit into the definitions of either. Yet is it beyond all question the one great reality, and as such must it include whatever element of spiritual truth is in either.

Trust in Christ there is in this relation of spirit to him—trust of the most intimate, most fundamental nature; for it is trust in him as our life; it is really the trust of the branch in the vine—trust for the sap of the vine. But it manifestly is not a movement of the human spirit that can be defined as men have defined justifying faith; for though it has reference to the favour of God as resting upon Christ, and contemplates that favour as life, recognizing the life given in Christ as indeed life, because of that favour; and so has the merits of Christ, and God's delight in Christ, at the foundation of the peace which accompanies it. This is not in the way of dividing between participation in the favour that rests on Christ, and participation in the mind of Christ: on the contrary, participation in the mind of Christ it conceives of as that condition of the human spirit to which alone the divine favour can extend; and so far is it from conceiving of the faith of the gospel as something as to which we must carefully guard against the idea of

its being pleasing or acceptable for its own sake, or indeed being more than the mere thread that in God's plan connects us with that in Christ which is pleasing and acceptable, that on the contrary it recognizes the call to faith as a call to that exercise of man's being in which there is most glory given to God; as it is written, "Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Again, the feeding on Christ of which I speak is as truly a culture of all the graces of the spirit as it is a trust in Christ. But whatever, in the actual experience of men of God, is common to it, and to what is recognized as the sanctification to be added to justification, a wide distinction holds between them in this, that not as fruits of faith, needful to prove that we are justified, and so are saved, are these graces desired; nor even, as some have said, feeling that they were taking higher ground, as imparting the necessary meetness for heaven, but these graces are desired, the culture of them is engaged in directly for their own sake, and not as evidences of a saved state, but as themselves portions of the salvation received—elements of the eternal life given to us in Christ, and not the mere meetness to receive that life hereafter.

Therefore, I say, that the great reality of eating the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinking his blood, is not to be defined either in the language in which men have spoken of justifying faith, or in that in which they have spoken of sanctification, though I do not doubt that it has been present, not unfrequently, in the experience which has been described

as the one of these, and also in that which has been described as the other. And to this belief I anxiously cling, feeling thankful for all I meet with in the records of christian experience which justifies me in clinging to it; for it is manifest that, if obliged to give it up—if obliged to see the peace of many professing trust in Christ, through their own definitions of justifying faith, or their own views of the place of the graces of the spirit in the christian scheme, I could no longer think of them as heirs of the righteousness which is by faith, or as partakers in that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. If their actual confidence towards God, and expectation of acceptance and acknowledgment in drawing near to him, must be conceived of as strictly according to the belief, that God accepts of them as righteous without reference to their receiving Christ as their life, on the simple and exclusive ground of their trusting to the merits of his work; or if they must be regarded as indeed cultivating holiness, truth, love, not for their own sake, nor as the ultimate good, and the elements of the salvation given to them in Christ, but just as proofs that their faith is that which secures an interest in the merits of Christ, and so what will secure their salvation, then are both their confidence of acceptance with God and their practical care to do his commandments, alien from the righteousness and the sanctification known to those who are of God in Christ Jesus, and who know Christ as “made of God unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

But however liable to abuse, and however often

abused may be the distinction drawn between the intellect and the spirit—between what a man thinks, and what a man is, I cannot but be thankful that it has a foundation in truth, when I thus consider what, in the matter before us, giving up that distinction would imply. And my conviction is, that to assume a necessity for holding that men's own exposition of the elements of their religious peace and hope is the true exposition of them, would be, in many of the cases in which the language of a wrong system is used, unjust as well as painful.

The words which I have just quoted—"who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," to my mind, present the one eternal life given to us in the Son of God, in four elements and aspects: and to separate the righteousness spoken of from the rest, and to represent it as ours on a totally different principle from that on which they are ours, regarding it as imputed, while they are imparted, seems at once unnatural as an understanding of the apostle's words, and a separating between our confidence towards God and our participation in the life of Christ, that all real experience of that life would teach men to reject; and yet it may be that the very conviction that the sanctification is something to be wrought in us, and which will be wrought in us, is the real reconciling of the conscience to the faith, that the righteousness is only imputed.

So also as to the words—"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," when

men contend that they recognize the co-existence of ungodliness and justifying faith, so that a man is pronounced just being actually ungodly; and will not concede to the faith which justifies, that it is in itself a godly condition of the human spirit, but only something which connects the believer with Christ's righteousness; so that, though actually ungodly, he is accounted righteous: it may seem very bold to separate between this intellectual misconception and the state of the man's spirit who contends for it, and so venture to cherish a comfort about him from indications of the one, which seems forbidden by the other; and yet it may be quite discernible that the real ground on which he finds it possible to believe in this imputation of righteousness, as co-existent with present ungodliness, is, that it is contemplated as a step towards the destruction of ungodliness; so that, though no godliness be recognized in the faith itself, it is regarded as the power which is to produce godliness.

Still, whatever redeeming elements may be present, or however conscience may be heard demanding, with an authority that will not be gainsayed, a righteous character in the peace of mind that claims to be peace with God, there is, there can be no doubt, that departure from the simplicity that is in Christ, such as we have been considering, must be evil, and fruitful of evil.

Those who are acquainted with the terms, "subjective religion," "objective religion," will, I trust, see that I am not simply contending for the co-ordinate importance of the former and the latter, or

insisting upon the realization of what God calls on us to be as being an element in true religion as essential as the faith of what he calls us to know and believe. If what we are called on to know and believe, the objective in religion, be truly conceived of, that which we are called on to be—the subjective—is already before us; and *to be it*, is the imperative demand addressed to us by what we know and believe. This indeed seems practically denied when it is felt necessary to say, “It is not enough that you believe what you are required to believe: you must also be what you are required to be.” But there can be no doubt that the objective demands the subjective, as truly as the subjective presupposes the objective. My conviction is of a departure from the simplicity that is in Christ in the conception alike of what we are taught to believe, and of what we are expected to become in believing.

As to the amount of this departure, I feel it difficult to avoid seeming to say either less or more than what I feel. If I speak of it spiritually, I have such a conviction of the preserving power that is in all earnest actual dealing with God, in self-distrust and self-despair, and in that hope only which his free grace inspires, aided by the faithfulness of a quickened conscience, that in expressing my belief as to the extent to which the heart and spirit may be in harmony with the will of God beyond what the intellect apprehends of the divine counsel, I am in danger of seeming to make less account of the error of which I have spoken than accords with my persuasion of its magnitude. On the other hand, if I lay out broadly,

as I have at present been endeavouring to do, the amount of difference in the intellectual conception of feeding upon Christ as the bread of life, I am in danger of seeming to conclude that if intellectual error be operative at all, the operation of such error as this must be well-nigh fatal.

I must trust for sympathy with me in this difficulty to what consciousness you may have of the great duality, so to speak, which is in man viewed as a spiritual and as an intellectual being; and of the slowness of our progress towards perfected inward unity. I will endeavour to be true to my convictions of the evil, considered at once in both its aspects, and call the conditions of mind in which it presents itself superficial and inadequate views of truth.

That view of the grace of God I regard as superficial and inadequate which, while it recognizes the freeness of the love of God to man, and man's exclusive dependence on what that love spontaneously gives, to the rejection of all idea of claim or merit, does not discern in that freeness, or in the nature of the gift given, enough to exclude boasting on the part of the receiver of the gift. Hence carnal expedients to exclude boasting, and more especially the change in the conception of justifying faith from being that of the reception of Christ as our life to that of a naked trust in his work for man as a ground of acceptance with God.

That view of the work of Christ and of the merits of Christ I regard as superficial and inadequate, which, as to the work of Christ, permits us to cherish peace on the ground that that work has

been performed, apart from the recognition of that call to spiritual participation in it which that work addresses to us; and which, as to the merits of Christ, calculates on God's rejoicing over a condition of humanity, which is not in itself a fit thing for God to rejoice over, because of his delight in these merits: while in truth the delight of God in the merits of Christ can warrant no conclusion other than that he will ever delight in all measures of that condition of humanity of which they are the perfection:—the voice of that delight uttering itself to us, and for our guidance, being, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."

That view of the atonement and of the forgiveness of sins I regard as superficial and inadequate, which rests in the declared fact of the atonement and the forgiveness, and does not, as to the atonement, apprehend the nature of the condemnation of sin in the flesh which is in the sacrifice of Christ, or the call which it addresses to us to unite ourselves to that condemnation by the rejection of the life of the flesh; and, as to the forgiveness, does not imply any communion in the blood of Christ, any fellowship in his death, any discernment of that power in Christ's blood which the apostle recognizes when he says, "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"

Finally, I regard as superficial and inadequate that

conception of our relation to Christ, as having left us an example that we should walk in his steps, which, while recognizing the outward form of his life on earth, and in some lower sense also, the inward regulation of his life according to the law of righteousness, as practical light for our guidance, still leaves a broad gulf between his confidence towards God and our confidence towards God. Such a gulf between him and us is interposed by the erroneous view of justification by faith, against which I have been contending; for that view introduces a whole system of thought and feeling into the region of our intercourse with God, and that at the very heart of that intercourse, to which there is—to which there could be nothing parallel in the example of Christ. Consider the mental elements of justifying faith as it has been defined—the position consciously taken by the human spirit—the nature of the confidence cherished. Nothing of it all is first in Christ—nothing of it is an element in the eternal life revealed in Christ. It is no form of the spirit of Christ. The confidence it includes is not one in nature with that which accompanies the spirit of sonship, and is of its essence according to the words, “There is no fear in love—perfect love casteth out fear.” This is evident; and I do not suppose that any will contend that the kind of confidence which is held to accompany what is called justifying faith, is one in nature with that of the Son towards the Father. But the conclusion that the conception of the example of Christ which recognizes at this point so great a gulf between him and us, is superficial and

inadequate, may not be so readily conceded. Yet I cannot judge otherwise, as I understand the words of our Lord, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." In fellowship with him as the truth and the life, is the Lord known as the way. No man cometh unto the Father but by him, inasmuch as humanity cannot attain to God but in the eternal life given in the Son of God. No other conscious condition of humanity is nearness to God but that which is presented to us in the humanity of Christ. For not as a mere permission to come—a personal liberty and warrant to come—are we to conceive of our access to God in Christ, but as a spiritual power to draw near to God in newness of life, as the apostle says of Jew and Gentile, "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." To sonship are we called in the Son of God. In the confidence inherent in sonship are we called to follow God as dear children, walking in love. In the very inmost experience pertaining to our intercourse with God, are we to have the consciousness of following our Lord and walking in his steps. If the example left us by our Lord as the first-born among many brethren has this extent, can we be called to the exercise of a faith and confidence towards the Father, alien from his, and impossible for him?

I have chosen the expressions "superficial and inadequate," rather than erroneous, because practically, if not logically, they more truly state the fact. And I am not a little anxious, that where there is a true trust in Christ in connection with the forms of

thought to which I object, it should be felt that I am only urging progress in a path already entered upon. It is not any form of self-trust as opposed to trust in Christ for which I call, but a more perfect negation of self-trust, and a more absolute, and deeper, and all-embracing trust in Christ than can be known otherwise; the opposition being not between my own works and Christ's work, but between my own life and Christ's life: that which is given up being, not my works alone, but the life of flesh which took form in them; what is recognized and accepted as the gift of God, being not Christ's work alone; but the eternal life in Christ which took form in his work.

And many and perplexing to the spirit are the confusions which arise from stopping short of this apprehension of justifying faith. Life is said to be in God's favour; and God's favour rests upon Christ. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And, that that favour may rest upon us, and so life in God's favour be our portion, the Father's call to us is, "Hear ye him." And so, being taught of God, we listen to the voice of the good Shepherd, and his word is fulfilled in us, "My sheep know my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life." So we receive life in hearing the Son in obedience to the drawing of the Father; life both as viewed in itself, the fellowship of the mind of Christ; and as viewed with reference to the divine favour, participation in that favour which rests on Christ. So, whether we think of life as the reality in Christ, the law of the spirit of the life that is in him; or as the favour and accep-

tance and personal acknowledgment of God, one direction is given to our attention—on one thing is our hope fixed, viz., that obedience to the will of Christ—that receiving him as the Lord of our spirits—that eating his flesh and drinking his blood of which I have been speaking.

But if in respect to life as what exists in God's favour, we are directed to keep our minds trusting in what Christ has done, thinking of God as looking at that work of Christ, and not at us at all, while in respect to life as a condition of our own being, we are directed to look to the Spirit of Christ to work in us that holiness without which no man may see the Lord,—surely by such teaching distraction is introduced into our thoughts of life, and practical embarrassment into our pursuit of life.

Or, to look at the same reality in an aspect a little different, the divine favour is connected with the region of conscience in man, inasmuch as it is there that God expresses to man his pleasure and displeasure. No one denies that, while we are without Christ, the voice in conscience condemns what we are; and however Scripture may have been instrumental in awakening conscience, or in helping us to understand the condemnation addressed to us by conscience, no one is regarded as spiritually convinced of sin whose conviction that he is a sinner is not immediate and direct,—the result of seeing himself in the light of truth,—and not a doctrinal inference from the statements of Scripture. Now what is thus condemned is the life of the flesh—the old man—and ourselves personally as living that life.

When, then, another life, the life of Christ, is revealed to us in the Spirit as the Father's gift to us in the Son, and we receive it to be our life, feeding upon Christ,—the favour of God resting on this life, and now upon us in our choosing this life, is testified also in the conscience, just as the divine displeasure formerly was; and neither is now, any more than formerly as to the conviction of sin, the conviction that we are righteous in God's sight, a doctrinal inference from the statements of Scripture; but the immediate and direct result of seeing ourselves in the light of truth. *As the divine testimony within was formerly against us, it now is for us*, "the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God."

But adopt the view of justification to which I have objected, and substitute for this conscious reception of that life on which the divine favour rests, and consequent personal sense of divine favour, a mental reference to the work of Christ as ascribed to us, and a keeping of our own actual condition out of sight altogether, and manifestly the peace so attained is cherished in the way of a doctrinal inference from statements of Scripture, and is no direct testimony of the conscience at all; neither presents that parallel to the sense of guilt and condemnation which, in the true view, is so close, and gives to the peace enjoyed so deep a foundation.

I have ventured to describe this careful keeping away from the recognition of the consciousness of receiving Christ as our life, when the way in which it comes to pass that the favour of God, which rests

upon Christ, comes to rest upon us, is set forth as a carnal expedient for excluding boasting; for it seems to be suggested by the fear, that to say directly, as the apostle says, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God,"—"Herein have we boldness in the day of judgment: that as he is, so are we in this world," could not be without boasting. I believe that, Christ being revealed in us the hope of glory, boasting will be excluded alike by the consciousness that we have but what we have received, and by the nature of that which we have received; for if we have received Christ to be our life, we, in the deepest sense, have learned of him who is meek and lowly in heart.

But is boasting excluded by the expedient adopted? To say that it is a carnal expedient—a human device, and not a divine counsel, is to suggest that it is not. And my conviction is, that while true faith excludes boasting because it is in its nature the right position of the spirit towards God, the hope of guarding against boasting by holding that we are not to boast of faith, because it is but the link that connects us with that work of Christ in which it is that God has pleasure, is futile; for, say to ourselves what we will about it, faith, after all, makes the difference between us and others that believe not, but for whom, as for us, Christ died: and if it were, as on this scheme it would be, an act of acceptance on our part of an arbitrary arrangement, and not a spiritual apprehension of the eternal life, there would be room for self-complacency in the consciousness that we had accepted and so done our part; and in

this way the most pure self-righteousness might be present under the guise of the negation of self-righteousness. How true do we thus see the instinct of spiritual men to have been who, in connection with this system, have given earnest warning of the danger of making a Christ of our faith! Nay, have they not still further manifested distrust in the expedient of their system for excluding boasting, when, after reducing faith to the most naked conception of a link or a thread, that it might not interfere with the place given to the work of Christ, the further security has been had recourse to of regarding that faith itself as in such a sense the work of God, and a special putting forth of divine power, as that, on that ground also, boasting would be excluded: a view of the origin of faith,—however near the truth of the due recognition of the drawing of the Father,—not in harmony, certainly, with the care taken to preclude the idea of there being any thing of the nature of righteousness inherent in the faith itself.

But may we not say—"Salvation has God appointed for walls and bulwarks." Light is its own wall against darkness. The life of Christ is the light of men. That life saves him from boasting who receives it to be his life.

The confusion introduced into our thoughts of eternal life when the divine favour is separated from the life of Christ and referred to the work of Christ, and we are taught to expect participation in that favour, not in receiving Christ's life to be our life, but in having his work imputed to us; and the corresponding confusion introduced into the region of

conscience, when the divine acknowledgment of the righteousness of faith is regarded as altogether different in its nature from the divine condemnation of sin, and, while the latter is admitted to be a direct testimony of God condemning what we are, the former is represented as not a testimony to the condition of our spirits at all—these practical perplexities introduced into the inner life, in the region of justifying faith, necessarily extend themselves in corresponding forms into the region of worship.

The intimacy of the relation between feeding upon Christ as the bread of life, and worshipping God through Christ, has already engaged our attention in connection with another error. It comes before us again here; for it could not have been that a wrong conception of justification by faith could have failed to introduce a wrong conception of praying in Christ's name—of expecting an answer to prayer for Christ's sake.

The conception of christian worship which has been expressed above, and to which a response in other minds has been hoped for, is, that is the eternal life in the form of worship—that living acknowledgment of what God is, and hope towards Him in oneness of mind with what He is, which accords with the language —“worship in spirit and in truth.” It is the eternal life which comes to us through the Son, ascending from us through the Son—the Son in us honouring the Father—the worship of Sonship—as such grateful to the Father, who seeketh such worship. Freedom and confidence of acknowledgment are of the very nature of such worship; arising

necessarily from the oneness of the Spirit, causing oneness of mind and will in the worshippers and in Him who is worshipped. In such worship there is a continual living presentation of Christ to the Father—a continual drawing upon the delight of the Father in the Son—the outgoing of a confidence that, whatever is asked in Christ's name—in the light of his name—in the faith of the Father's acknowledgment of that name—will be received. The praises rendered—the desires cherished—the prayers offered—are all within the circle of the life of Christ, and ascend with the assurance of partaking in the favour which pertains to that life—which rests upon Him who is that life. It is worship according to the words of Paul—"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." If we change the language in which we speak of this worship, and instead of using that of our Lord, when he teaches us that what we "ask the Father in his name," shall be given to us, say in the words of the apostle John, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him," we feel that we have only changed the form of expression, and that it is one confidence which in either way is equally truly expressed; as indeed how could it be otherwise? Our Lord could not put confidence as to the answer of prayer on one footing, and the apostle put it on another.

But I have said, that a wrong conception of justification by faith, could not fail to introduce a wrong conception of praying in Christ's name; and we know that, in point of fact, men have followed out a system consistently at the expense of giving to the expressions of our Lord, in placing the assurance of an answer to prayer on the ground of its being offered in his name, a meaning altogether different from that now assumed, according to which these expressions are synonymous with those of the apostle, which rest that assurance on harmony with the divine will in the prayer itself. When, in the close of a prayer, it is added, that an answer is expected for Christ's sake, and on the ground of his merits, we know that it is not intended by such language to claim for the prayer which has preceded, the character of having been offered in Christ's spirit—of having been an utterance of the life of Christ in the worshipper. Were such the meaning intended, the use of the words would accord with what our Lord really teaches, when he instructs us to pray in his name. But the sense in which they are employed is altogether different. As men employ them they express a passing away from the character of the prayer itself, and a disclaiming of any hope from that character, and a betaking of themselves, on the part of the worshippers, to the name of Christ, as affording a ground of confidence which the spirit of the prayer itself has not furnished. As if, while the apostle directs attention to the nature and essence of the prayer itself—its harmony with the divine will—our Lord meant to turn us away from this, and to

fix our hope on his own merits, as affording a confidence altogether independent of harmony with the divine will in the prayer, and which should sustain hope even under the consciousness that the prayer itself had no claim to be heard, nor fitness to awaken a response in the heart of God. The coherence and harmony of a system here is undeniable. As in seeking justification the mind is trained to turn away from its own conscious attitude towards God, as the giver of eternal life in his Son, to engage in a mental reference to the imputed work of Christ; so in prayer it is trained to turn away from the spirit and nature of its own cry to God, and to build its hope of an answer on its presenting Christ's merits to the Father as the ground on which it pleads. But just as we have seen that the former mental process differs from that which the apostle recognizes, when he says, "if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God," so is it manifest that the latter mental process differs from that which the same apostle recognizes when he says, "if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us." And thus the perplexity and confusion introduced into the region of justification by faith, extend themselves into the region of prayer. And our Lord in teaching us to expect an answer because we pray in his name, and the apostle in teaching us to expect an answer because we ask things according to the Father's will, are made to be to us as two masters presenting to us totally distinct grounds of confidence in drawing near to God.

But the law of the kingdom of God, according to

which prayer in the name of the Son is answered, and that according to which prayer for things according to the Father's will is answered, are one and the same law. For to ask in the name of the Son, is to ask in the light of his name in whom the Father is well-pleased. In answering such prayer God is not granting for Christ's sake what for its own sake he would not grant. He is granting that which His delight in Christ reveals his eternal willingness to grant. In its most imperfect lisping of the Father's name, the life of the Son in us is that same life on which, in our Lord at the right hand of the Father, the light of the Father's countenance ever shines. It is this oneness of the eternal life in its feeblest dawn in us, and in its fullness in Christ, which identifies us, and our hope and confidence, with that fullness "connecting us and glory in one thought," in a way that sometimes presents itself as an explanation of the origin of the faith of the imputation of righteousness. For on this ground the babe in Christ, in whom the kingdom of heaven is as a grain of mustard seed, is taught to cherish the desire and to offer the prayer into which the life of Christ forms itself, with a confidence of acceptance which is according to the faith of the delight of the Father in the Son.

I will now come to a close with this attempt to give a profitable direction to the present occupation of men's minds with Romanism. The use which has just been made of the relation between feeding upon Christ as the bread of life, and worshipping God through him, in endeavouring to bring out the evil

of erroneous conceptions of justification by faith, and of praying in Christ's name, will recall to my readers the application of it formerly made in considering the subject of the Mass. The parallelism of these spiritual operations—feeding on Christ, and praying through Christ—to the two parts of the Mass was then considered as at once illustrating the relation of these two aspects of the life of faith, and confirming the view, that the Mass was a substitute and counterfeit: and any whose intelligent sympathy I have been receiving, will agree with me that, we have now met another substitute for the life of faith—a substitute also for that life in both its aspects—as feeding upon Christ, and worshipping through Christ—within the circle of Protestantism, less gross than the Mass of Romanism, and therefore more suited to an intellectual age, but in being so, only more dangerous to us. The saying of Luther, that if the Pope would allow him to preach justification by faith, he would not object to the Mass, has been referred to above as indicating, that at the time he so spoke he did not clearly apprehend how subversive of the Mass, and of all that is cognate to the Mass, justification by faith really is. But that preaching justification by faith should destroy men's belief in the Mass, is a result that can be rejoiced in only in so far as it is the truth of justification by faith which takes the place of that delusion. If indeed men cease from using the consecrated material substance in that service as the food of eternal life, because it is no longer regarded by them as the body and blood of the Lord, and, so ceasing, turn to the engrafted word and feed

upon it, receiving the life of Christ to be their life, the change is one in which to rejoice; and if men cease to offer the eucharistic offering in the Mass, because they no longer believe that therein they offer Christ anew to the Father, and so ceasing, engage in that worship in spirit and in truth which is the living presentation of Christ to the Father in that worship of sonship which is the worshipping form of the eternal life given to us in the Son, this change also is one in which to rejoice. But that the Mass should give place, not to the spiritual reality of which it is the counterfeit, but to an intellectual operation which in reference to the great spiritual reality is but a counterfeit also—in this there is nothing in which to rejoice. An intellectual substitute for the life of Christ is not less fatal than a material substitute. The mental operation of reference to Christ's work assumed to be imputed to us is no more able to supply the place of receiving Christ as our life, than the physical operation of feeding upon the material substance assumed to be transubstantiated into the body and blood of the Lord, and the mental pleading of Christ's merits in prayer is no more able to supply the place of praying in the Spirit of Christ, than the physical act of offering up the eucharistic offering. The physical substitute for the life of faith assumes a physical mystery. Does not the intellectual substitute assume a moral mystery? The former is without witness in the conscience, and is taken upon trust in the way of implicit faith. Is not this true of the latter also? The Romanist receives transubstantiation, accepting the Scriptures as

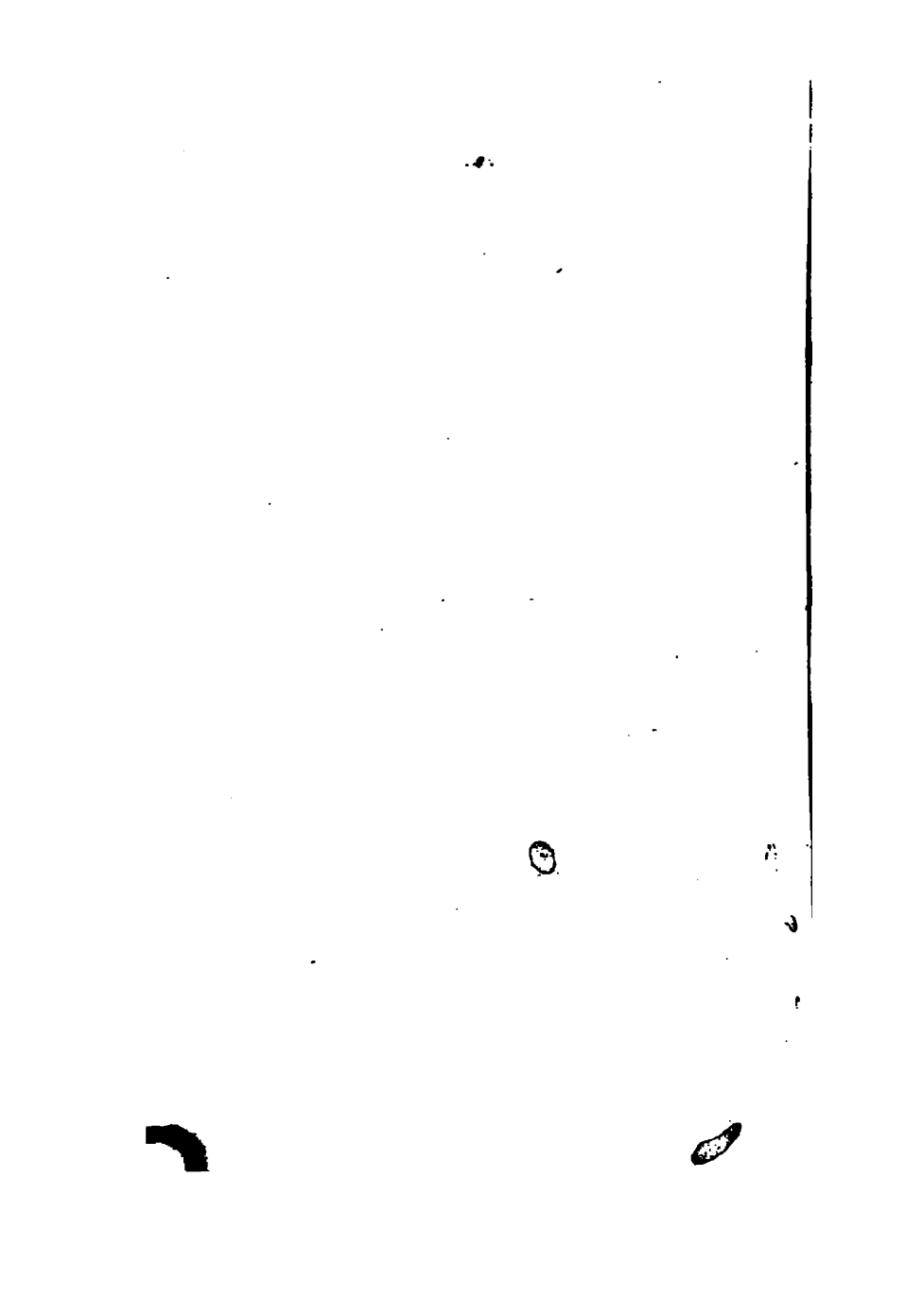
interpreted by the Church, and feels no need of any corresponding light in conscience. The Protestant who receives imputation of righteousness is accepting the same Scriptures as interpreted by himself, and he also feels no need of a corresponding light in conscience. Let us not be misled by the fact that the latter goes directly to the Scriptures, while the former suffers the Church to come between him and the Scriptures. However important in other views this difference is, it affects not the matter before us. The Church which demands from men implicit faith in her own teaching, and forbids their seeking individually to see light in God's light, errs not merely because her claim to infallibility is unwarranted:—she would err in making such a demand even were she infallible. And when we go direct to the infallible record, if we regard the inspired men who speak to us there as making a demand for faith such as the Church of Rome makes, reconciling ourselves to the demand because they are inspired, we greatly err. They make no such demand. We may think to honour their inspiration by holding what we understand them to teach, not recognizing any need for a corresponding light in conscience; but in so doing we shall be giving to the record of their teaching a place which as living men they did not themselves take. Shall we supersede conscience to make room for the authority of men whose testimony concerning themselves is, that by manifestation of the truth they commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God? These teachers sent from God sought not to supersede the teaching

of God. The answer of a good conscience towards God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to which they laboured to raise men, is a condition of the human conscience spiritually educated and developed, not a peace in the reception of a moral mystery, which has no corresponding light in conscience, and is held in a way of implicit faith.

The necessity for our being all taught of God, is if possible, a more important subject of thought than that which has now led us to it—at least more radical; but I attempt not to discuss it here. This important consideration it suggests with general reference to what is going on around us, that Protestants take wrong ground with Romanists when controverting the necessity for an infallible Church, evading the conclusions drawn from the diversity of opinion originated by the exercise of the right of private judgment, and taking their stand upon the abstract truth of the Scriptures, not recognizing the need there is—as surely there is need—in some way to bridge over the gulf between the abstract truth of the record and the certainty that an individual reader of the record has hold of the truth. Protestants do not look this matter full in the face. Surely it is one thing to know that the Bible is true, and another thing to know that I myself am in the light of the truth that is in the Bible. To say I judge for myself as to the meaning of what I read, is, as respects certainty, to say nothing, unless I can add that I myself am infallible. The real fact is, that it is not the place of the Bible that the Church of Rome has taken in claiming infallibility, but the

place of the living God—whose voice heard and known alone gives individual certainty of being in the light of life. The Romanist looks to the Church to interpret the Scriptures that he may certainly know the meaning of what he reads: the man of God expects and waits upon the teaching of God, and so expects to understand that which he reads. For in God's light alone does the individual human spirit see light clearly. Spiritual light as natural light is its own witness. Let us who call ourselves Protestants in this matter consider how far in our dealing with Romanists we are found obeying that word of the Lord, "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Until we ourselves give the right place to conscience and the teaching of God, we cannot really help Romanists. For of Romanism, however varied the forms of error which it presents, this is the root evil—that it addresses not conscience, neither directs men to the living God, to be taught of him.







